i) Enhancement of budget outlays for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), a programme for Universalisation of Elementary Education, National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary level (NPEGEL) and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) scheme for the promotion of education of girl children, have been given impetus.

ii) Introduction of cooked Mid-Day Meal (MDM) scheme for all children in classes I - VIII in Government / Local Body and Government Aided Schools, and Centres under the Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) and Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS).

iii) Levy of 2% Education Cess on all central taxes in order to bridge the gap between available plan resources and estimated requirement to finance the programme for universalisation of elementary education, specifically SSA and MDM.

Decrease in biology students

†1431. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the number of students opting for biology in class XI has seen a fall in the current session;

(b) whether any assessment of the reasons therefor has been undertaken;

(c) whether this fall would adversely affect the number of doctors in future; and

(d) if so, the remedial measures being contemplated by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) Biology is offered as an elective 'subject in Class XI and XII. There has been a fall in the number of candidates appearing in the subject "biology" in Class XII exam being conducted by CBSE in 2008 as compared to 2007.

(b) No formal assessment of reasons has been done by the Ministry, but probable reasons include limited avenues for biology students to pursue medicine, longer duration of medicine course and preference of students for engineering courses.

(c) CBSE conducts All India Pre-Medical/Pre Dental Entrance Examination (AIPMT). In 2008, about 1.48 lakh students appeared for 2206 seats that were available. Since only a few of students opting for biology in classes XI and XII go for medicine degree, reduction in candidates opting for biology is not likely to affect the number of doctors in the near future in a significant manner.

(d) For promoting students' interest in science and inspiring them to pursue science related careers, CBSE has been organizing Regional level and National level Science Exhibitions. In addition, a number of orientation programmes for Science Teachers working in CBSE affiliated schools have been organized to enhance their professional competency.

Setting up of an international university

1432. SHRI N.K. SINGH: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether Government has received a proposal from abroad for setting up of an international university in the country;

(b) whether Government is considering any proposal, *suo moto*, to establish a foreign university in the country, to supplement and upgrade arrangements and standards respectively for university education; and

(c) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. However, a South Asian University is being set up for member countries of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), with campuses in all SAARC members countries.

Higher education to SC and ST women

1433.SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN SINGH: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of schemes formulated and executed for imparting higher education to SC and ST women; and

(b) the number of SC and ST women benefited from those schemes and how many of them have become self-reliant?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) and (b) All schemes of the University Grants Commission (UGC) for imparting quality higher education aim at enhancing access of the Scheduled Castes (SCs) & Scheduled Tribes (STs) including women belonging to these sections of the population. According to UGC's 11 Plan Report, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of SC women is 3.16% and ST women is 5.57%.

Literacy in States and UTs

1434.SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the present percentage of literacy in different States and Union Territories of the country;

(b) the number of students between 6 to 14 years at present, who do not attend schools;

(c) the status of drop-outs in different States and Union Territories; and

(d) the plan of Government to bring drop-outs to zero-point, and the achievement made so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) The literacy data in the country is collected through decennial census operation conducted by Registrar General of India. A Statement indicating State-wise literacy rate as per the last census held in 2001 is given in the Statement-I (*See* below).